

THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

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A/ISS/IPS, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
December 18, 2008

NSC UNDER SECRETARIES COMMITTEE

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NSC-U/N-178

September 23, 1976

TO : The Deputy Secretary of Defense
The Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs
The Director of Central Intelligence
The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
The Deputy Secretary of the Treasury
The Under Secretary of Agriculture
The Under Secretary of Commerce
The Under Secretary of Health, Education,
and Welfare
The Director, Office of Management and
Budget
The Chairman, Council of Economic Advisers
The Chairman, Council on Environmental
Quality
The Director, National Science Foundation
The Administrator, Agency for International
Development
The Acting Executive Director, Council for
International Economic Policy

SUBJECT: Maintaining the Worldwide Balance between Food
and Population

Building on the work of the Development Coordination
Committee on relating P.L. 480 programming to development
efforts, the Interagency Task Force on International
Population Policy has prepared the attached paper,
"Maintaining Worldwide Balance Between Food and Population:
Implications for U.S. Policy." It has been cleared by the
members of the Interagency Task Force.

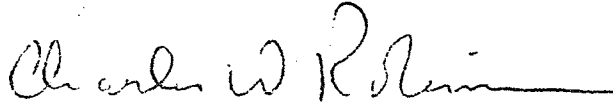
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I concur in the conclusion of this paper, and I ask that State and AID assure the effective operation of procedures to implement the recommendations stated in the concluding paragraph as a regular part of the AID program/budget cycle.



Charles W. Robinson
Chairman

Attachment:

As stated

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

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INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE ON POPULATION POLICY

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September 14, 1976

MAINTAINING WORLDWIDE BALANCE BETWEEN
FOOD AND POPULATION: IMPLICATIONS
FOR U.S. POLICY

1. NSSM-200 (Executive Summary) points out that growing populations will have a serious impact on the need for food, especially in the poorest, fastest growing LDC's. While total world agricultural production could expand faster than population, there will nevertheless be major problems in food distribution and financing, making shortages, even at today's poor nutrition levels, probable in many countries. The most serious likelihood for the short and middle term is the possibility of massive famines in certain parts of the world, according to NSSM-200. Many countries will find it increasingly difficult to pay for needed food, fuel, and other imports.

2. Embassy evaluations (received in 1976) of the world population crisis largely substantiated the conclusions of NSSM-200, but placed even greater emphasis on the significant impact of population growth on unemployment and on environmental deterioration, the latter primarily a result of soil erosion from inadequate or non-existent soil conservation measures by traditional farmers seeking to maintain or increase food production. Embassy evaluations are somewhat less concerned than NSSM-200 with regard to the availability of food to meet population growth in the immediate future. However, our Ambassadors see this as a serious threat in the longer run, with the LDC's increasingly dependent upon food imports, running deeper and deeper into debt, and unable or unwilling to finance the enormous capital cost involved in adequately expanding food production. This conclusion is generally confirmed by a recent USDA report* which concludes

* Office of Economic Research, USDA, memo to the Interagency Task Force on Population Policy, "Population and World Food Supplies," dated April 14, 1976.

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that, unless there is some check on population growth rates, "there ultimately is no solution to the world food problem."

3. This paper does not address the size of the anticipated growing gap between food and population in certain parts of the world--a subject open to considerable conflicting judgments amongst experts--but it accepts that this may be a serious problem requiring actions additional to those currently being taken to increase food production and lower population growth rates. Also, higher incomes in other parts of the world have expanded the demand for livestock products and, indirectly, for grains.

4. The United States has a primary concern to support efforts to maintain a viable balance between food and population. We are the largest food exporter of the world and, by far, the largest supplier of food assistance, currently providing 12 times as much food aid as population assistance. Clearly, it is in our interest as a major food and population assistance donor to help ensure that: (a) our food aid has maximum developmental impact; (b) it stimulates receiving countries to increase their own food production (bearing in mind, of course, environmental and other factors); and (c) it serves, to the extent possible, to promote and not run contrary to our population policy objectives. In regard to (a) and (b) above, AID has recently issued instructions to its field directors and representatives regarding P.L. 480, Title I, as a developmental resource. Plans are also under way to extend Food-for-Work programs under P.L. 480, Title II, which offer one of the best ways to ensure that our food aid is directly related to increasing food production in receiving countries as well as to providing employment in rural areas, thereby decreasing joblessness and migration to overcrowded urban areas.

5. With regard to (c), our records show that there has been a family planning component to several Food-for-Work projects (e.g., in India, Egypt, and Peru); and consideration, as recommended in the Interagency Task Force's First Annual Report to the President, should be given to expanding this approach wherever feasible.

6. But, in a broader sense, how can we make more effective use of our food assistance in stimulating receiving countries to deal more effectively with their population

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growth problems? Some countries receiving our food assistance have population problems but are doing little or nothing about them. If governments do not commit themselves to support effective population programs, we know that very little can be done on this score. Does not our food assistance provide an incentive for action? Moreover, an amendment to P.L. 480, enacted in the International Development and Food Assistance Act of 1975, requires that the President determine aid allocations on the basis of several criteria, including what receiving countries are doing in the way of voluntary programs to control excessive population growth.

7. It is therefore recommended that, where food production and population are clearly out of balance, countries requesting U.S. food assistance,* particularly Title I, be reminded forcefully and at an appropriately high level during the course of working out a P.L. 480 Sales Agreement of: (a) longer-term anticipated worldwide food shortages, citing FAO and other data in that connection, including increased commercial demand; and (b) Congressional requirements that our assistance be increasingly concentrated on countries that make effective use of such assistance, including their performance in improving agricultural output and nutrition and reducing population growth. Such an intervention would be made by Ambassadors under detailed, country-specific instructions from Washington, although we would leave it to the Ambassadors to convey the message in a way that would be most likely to produce effect without causing offense. It is important that this message be personally conveyed by our Ambassadors to levels no lower than the Foreign Minister (or the appropriate Minister concerned), and hopefully to the Prime Minister or President of the country requesting our food assistance, since this would also provide a useful opportunity to review what that country is doing to ease the food-population problem and, where required, to stimulate greater attention to the food-population linkage and programs related thereto. It would have the further advantage of placing receiving countries

* The recommendations contained in this paragraph, and generally in this paper, are also applicable in the case of a country with population problems which requests assistance other than food assistance, either bilaterally from the U.S. or through a consortium arrangement involving U.S. participation.

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on notice regarding the gravity of the longer-range food-population issue and of the urgent need to take timely action. We must recognize, however, that such an approach may have only limited impact since it is essentially an exhortation.

8. We must still consider whether the United States should go a step further to draw up and publicly disclose criteria under which we would provide our food assistance. Under these criteria and in the event that demands for U.S. food assistance exceeded availabilities, priority attention would be given to those countries implementing many or most of the provisions of the UN Food Conference (Rome, 1974) and the UN Population Conference (Bucharest, 1974), the only exception being where, through failure to give access to our supplies, widespread starvation would otherwise ensue.

9. Arguments favoring: Such an open approach would place the world community on notice that food shortages may soon occur and also provide an incentive for them to carry out their commitments under the Rome and Bucharest Conferences. An opposite alternative is to take no action, permitting countries to scramble for our food supplies, using whatever tactics or pressures they could muster; decisions would be made on the basis of marketplace forces, whims of the supplier including its geopolitical concerns of the moment, as well as influence peddling. Aside from the inequities of this approach, it is irresponsible because it does not permit us, as the principal supplier of food aid, to encourage countries to observe the provisions of the Rome and Bucharest Conferences.

10. Arguments opposing: We must assume that we cannot force countries to control their population growth by refusing to share food unless they have realistic population programs. How could we determine whether or not a country was living up to its responsibility under the Rome and Bucharest agreements? Some newly independent countries have not yet had an opportunity to grapple seriously with population issues. Others openly disavow the existence of a problem. Still others have had their programs set back by the overthrow of governments. And how is performance to be measured? Who is to judge? At times there could be

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critically important political reasons for not applying criteria against a country with deficient performance. Would setting forth specific criteria of this nature stimulate adverse nationalistic reactions and make it all the more difficult for governments to adopt population programs, lest, by doing so, they would appear before the world to be doing so under pressure from us? Would it not also invite LDC accusations that the U.S. and certain other countries are consuming more than their fair share of the world's food and that we could help more by eating less meat? Laying down advertised criteria has the further disadvantage of raising the question, unanswerable at this time, of what priorities the United States would establish at a time when world food demand exceeded supply as among friendly paying customers, paying customers regarded as less than friendly (e.g., the USSR), and those seeking our food on concessional terms. Indeed, such criteria could ultimately lead to the loss of needed flexibility in programming our food assistance and increase the risk that our food aid policies would fall subject to international control.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that we should not, at least at this time, proceed beyond quietly and diplomatically conveying our concern (including that of Congress), as set forth in paragraph 7 above. However, in extending food assistance, we should review carefully what the requesting country is doing to promote economic growth, including food production, and to limit population growth; and we should take into account these factors in deciding the allocation of food assistance.

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SUBSEQUENT ROUTING/ACTIONS

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